

DNR Response to Public Comments on Section 6 of the Draft Michigan State Forest Management Plan

December 27, 2007

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received eight comments that were directed to Section 6 (Monitoring, Review and Revision) of the draft Michigan State Forest Management Plan (SFMP). Comments focused on monitoring, plan revision drivers, and criteria and indicators. The DNR response to these comments follows:

The SFMP and subordinate ecoregional forest plans are intended to be flexible documents that will be periodically updated or revised. The revision process for the SFMP mirrors the requirements in the Forest Stewardship Council certification standards, which requires that operational components of ecoregional management plans will be reviewed and revised as necessary, but at a minimum of every five years. Strategic components of statewide and ecoregional management plans are to be reviewed and if necessary revised or updated at the completion of each 10-year compartment review cycle. If management review or monitoring results indicate the need for modification of the plan within a shorter time period, the plan may be revised before the 10-year requirement. However, the DNR does not believe that it is prudent to allow public requests for update at any time outside of the 5 and 10 year schedules, as this could be potentially disrupting to operations.

The public will have an additional opportunity for comment on the SFMP when the revised plan is presented to the Natural Resources Commission. Future plan revisions will be open to public involvement as well.

Criteria and indicators are one means of plan monitoring by which the DNR intends to measure the attainment of goals and objectives that are identified in the SFMP. Other means include annual management reviews based on internal and external forest certification surveillance audits, and field management reviews. By definition, the attainment of goals and objectives indicate the attainment of a desired future condition. Section 6 of the SFMP was modified to address the full range of DNR monitoring programs and mechanisms that report on State Forest operations. Over time, monitoring will aid in evaluating and measuring progress toward meeting objectives. It should also be observable through continual improvement in annual management reviews and ongoing forest certification audits.

A suggestion was made for inclusion of public involvement in the annual management review process. This comment is beyond that scope of the SFMP as such procedures are promulgated in Forest Certification Work Instruction 1.2,

Management Review Process for Continual Improvement in the Management of the Forest Resources.